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**FALMOUTH & THE MARTHA BRAE WATERSHED
NRCA Initiatives to Advance Sustainable Tourism and
Environmental Management**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Background & Executive Summary	1
2	Geographic, Economic and Environmental Context	3
2 1	Geographic Setting	3
2 2	Economic Setting	4
2 3	Environmental Issues	6
3	Natural & Cultural Heritage Resources Protection Efforts to Date	7
3 1	Government of Jamaica	7
3 2	NGOs	7
3 3	Private Organizations and Individuals	7
4	The Vision for Sustainable Tourism	8
4 1	The Vision for Historic Falmouth	8
4 2	The Vision for the Martha Brae Estuary and Coastal Resources	9
4 3	The Vision for the Martha Brae Uplands	10
4 4	The Vision for the Martha Brae Headwaters and Cockpit Country	12
4 5	The “Composite” Vision and Challenges to its Achievement	13
5	A Blueprint for NRCA Initiatives Applying Best Practices	14
5 1	Engage Stakeholders as Full Partners & Build on Local Initiatives	14
5 2	Develop Consensus and an “Action Framework”	15
5 3	Identify Components of a Sustainable Tourism Program & Assign Responsibilities	15
5 4	Create a “Sustainable Tourism Destination”	16
5 5	Focus on Financial Sustainability	17
5 6	Target Priority Actions and Build on Success	17
Annex		23
	Names of Individuals Interviewed	23
	Key References	24

FALMOUTH & THE MARTHA BRAE WATERSHED

NRCA Initiatives to Advance Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Management

I. Background and Executive Summary

Falmouth and the Martha Brae watershed represents Jamaica's most significant opportunity for development of community-based nature and cultural heritage tourism. Its location, its natural and historic assets, and its beauty combine to offer the promise of what could be the country's first serious attempt to offer a successful tourism product that capitalizes on the industry's growing interest in alternatives to traditional "sun, sand and sea" mass tourism. If carried out in harmony with local people's interests and needs, sustainable tourism development offers new jobs and income for area residents and opportunities for protection of both the natural environment and the cultural heritage of this area.

Focussing on one promising watershed with such prominent natural and cultural resources holds the opportunity for successful development of nature and cultural heritage tourism in this area and for adaptation of lessons learned to other locations in the country. Through

work in Falmouth and the Martha Brae, NRCA can inform itself and other development partners of ways to enhance the policy climate so that private and community actions can flourish.

For the purpose of this report, "sustainable tourism" is defined as nature tourism (or ecotourism), cultural heritage tourism and other forms of community-based tourism that contribute to economic development and to conservation of the natural and cultural resources on which it depends.

The NRCA has learned from its earlier work (Black River, Negril, Canoe Valley, Port Royal, Montego Bay) that any effort to address economic development and natural resources management is best achieved on an integrated, watershed basis in close partnership with other public agencies, local NGOs and the private sector. This means working with a range of disciplines and interest groups to implement a strategy for this watershed that reflects an understanding of the natural and cultural resources base, organizational capacity, finance, and local culture. This is by no means uncomplicated work, but it is clear that understanding the Martha Brae watershed as a dynamic, whole system is a prerequisite to introducing sound economic development and natural resource management interventions.

The NRCA is turning to those lessons from earlier work to prepare a road map for sustainable tourism in the Falmouth and Martha Brae area and future watersheds. Toward this end, the NRCA requested the assistance of Technical Support Services Inc. to prepare a brief study (12 person days) intended as an abbreviated overview of the potential for nature and cultural heritage tourism in the Martha Brae watershed and to recommend NRCA initiatives to achieve sustainable tourism in this area.

Given the brevity of the study period, only limited interaction with other GOJ agencies, local government, NGOs, businesses and citizens of the area was possible (see individuals contacted on page 23). From these discussions, however, it is clear that there is broad agreement about the needs of Falmouth and the Martha Brae watershed. On everybody's list of priorities are

- improving the economy to expand jobs and income,
- renovating the area's unmatched architectural heritage,
- establishing a protected area to conserve the Martha Brae estuary and the mangrove/coral reef ecosystem,
- protecting the watershed's relatively high level of environmental quality,
- improving housing, especially the squatter settlements,
- improving liquid and solid waste management, and
- improving social conditions, including education and health

Those residing here see the income and employment potential that can be derived from nature and cultural heritage tourism associated with a revitalized Falmouth and of a well-managed natural environment throughout the watershed. Local NGOs have recognized the need for their work to protect the natural and cultural environment and have embarked on some important initial steps. A number of private sector interests have likewise demonstrated genuine interest in assisting economic development and environmental protection throughout the area. But, while there is general agreement about the priorities, the vision for the area is still a puzzle whose pieces have yet to come together.

Growing from NRCA field experience and lessons learned from other watershed and community activities, a number of "best practices" are emerging that frame a strategy for NRCA actions to assist in achieving sustainable tourism development in the Falmouth and Martha Brae area. The components of these best practices are summarized here and discussed in the report.

- Engage NGOs, government agencies and the private sector as full partners
- Develop consensus and a clear set of action priorities among development partners
- Develop policies and a regulatory framework that encourage stakeholder action
- Build on local initiatives and emphasize local management and control
- Establish protected areas for managing key resources
- Focus on economic feasibility and financial sustainability of new interventions
- Encourage private investment in sustainable tourism and environmental improvements

Applying the best practices associated with each of these components is not easy. There are a great number of actions needed by a great number of organizations and individuals. There will be inevitable staff and budgetary constraints and inevitable inability of some crucial government, NGO and local partners to carry out initiatives. An assessment of these limits is needed on the front end and after doing so, NRCA and its partners may proceed with priority actions at a pace reflective of the availability of resources and organizational readiness. Several "levels of commitment" are described at the conclusion of the report.

1. At the minimum, a Martha Brae "sustainable development coordinating council" (or other title) made up of all principal players (government, community and private) should be established. This group would oversee development of an "action framework" which would set priorities for activities, establish sets of partnerships to pursue priority actions, assign leadership responsibilities, facilitate finance, secure donor assistance and provide general guidance and support to groups and individuals carrying out sustainable tourism and environmental

management activities. Even if very limited funds and staff are available, this council must find ways to prevent further irreversible losses of key resources (e.g., historic buildings and wetlands) and to promote donor support for key activities.

- 2 If a moderate level of resources are available, the council should also build on priority local efforts underway, e.g., assist the Trelawny Environmental Protection Association (TEPA) to carry out the planning work to establish the proposed marine and estuary protected area, support Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency's (STEA) continued efforts in environmental education, nature tourism, and improved hillside agricultural practices and assist the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT), the Falmouth Restoration Company (FRC), the Jamaica Heritage Trails, Limited (JHTL) and other private groups to advance Falmouth revitalization efforts.
- 3 If more extensive resources are available and if there is sufficient organizational readiness to proceed on many fronts, assist Falmouth and Martha Brae watershed leaders to achieve their visions of a complete world-class sustainable tourism destination that improves both environmental conditions and quality of life for residents.

2 Geographic, Economic and Environmental Context

2.1 The Geographic Setting

The greater Falmouth area, the seat of government of Trelawny Parish, is a community of just over 11,000 residents in a parish of approximately 75,000 residents. The Martha Brae watershed accounts for approximately 80% of the parish population.

The Martha Brae is the largest river in the parish. It draws its headwaters from one proposed World Heritage Site--the wilderness of the Cockpit Country--and empties through an estuary to its mouth east of another proposed World Heritage Site--historic Falmouth.

The Cockpit Country is the home of more than 100 endemic species surviving in large part due to the near impenetrability of its rugged limestone karst topography. This area has fascinating nature tourism opportunities, is internationally recognized for its extraordinary biodiversity, is a stronghold of Jamaica's most interesting sub-culture--the Maroons, and is the groundwater recharge area for at least four major hydrological basins of the western part of the country. For these reasons, the Cockpit Country is a high GOJ priority for establishment of a national protected area and is proposed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

From its headwaters in the Cockpit Country the Martha Brae meanders through a large basin of principally agricultural land (sugar cane, yams, papaya, cattle, etc.) and secondary forest land on its approximately 30 kilometer flow to its estuary. The river is an important source of water for Montego Bay and Falmouth and water is piped to these cities from a plant just upriver of its estuary.

The mangrove forests and wetlands of the Martha Brae estuary are among the most extensive in the country and support important fish nurseries and bird populations. The coral reefs (especially those to the east of the town of Falmouth) are among the healthiest on Jamaica's north coast. There are several exceptional natural attractions along the coast including the pristine beach and mangroves of Bush Cay, turtle nesting sites and a small manatee population, the internationally famous biophosphorescence of Glistening Waters, and the Salt Marsh ecosystem.

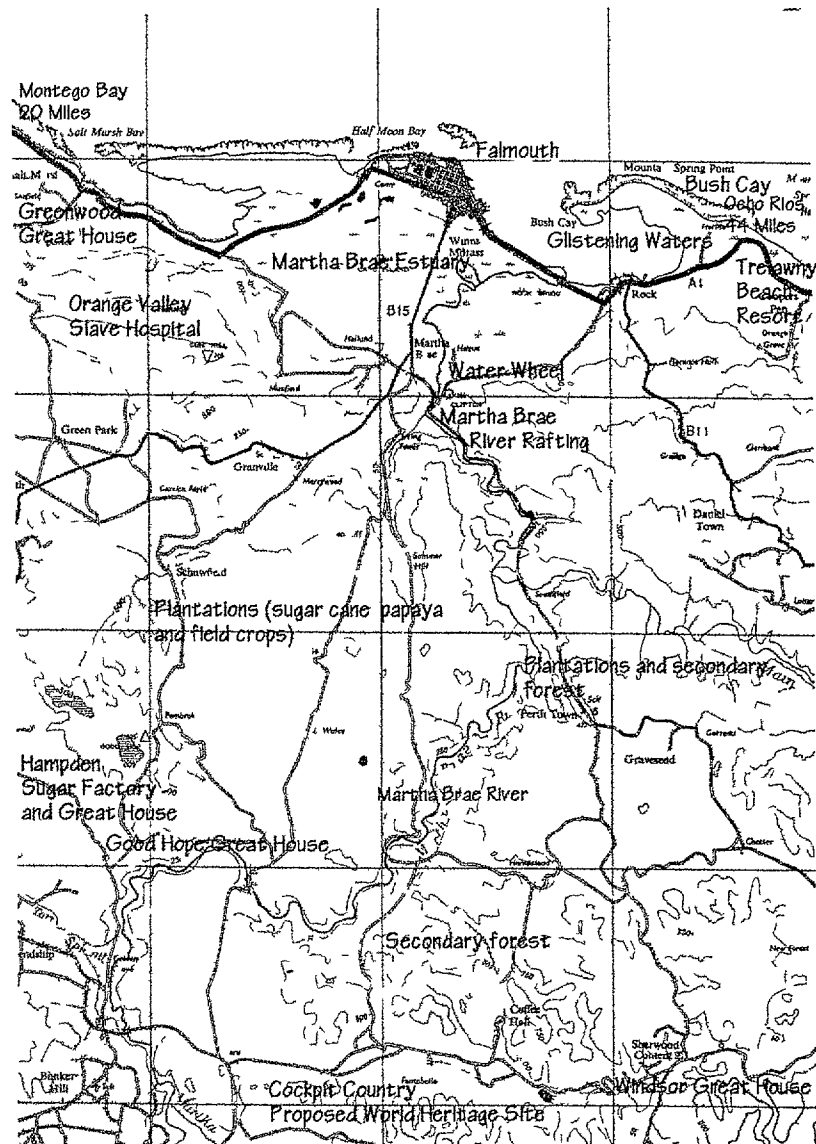
The town of Falmouth is recognized as one of the world's best remaining examples of a Georgian town with many 18th and 19th century buildings still intact. It has a fascinating history growing from its prosperous period as the island's center for the sugar and rum trade. Its history and unique architectural heritage has resulted in GOJ designation of Falmouth as a National Monument and of UNESCO nomination as a World Heritage Site.

2.2 The Economic Setting

Agriculture is the most important sector of the Trelawny Parish economy in terms of employment and income. Export crops including sugar, papayas and yams are the mainstays. Manufacturing also occurs in the Parish about half of which is located in Falmouth.

Tourism plays a surprisingly minor role in the economy given the area's location at the heart of north

coast tourism destinations and the area's natural and cultural attractions. While a considerable number of area residents are employed in the hotels of nearby Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, only one major hotel—the Trelawny Beach Hotel—lies within the watershed. There are several smaller hotels including the Good Hope Great House and Fisherman's Inn. In addition, there are several nature and cultural heritage tourism attractions that together employ a substantial number of local citizens including the Martha Brae Rafting Tour, the Greenwood Great House, the Good Hope Great House, the Hampden Estate, the Glistening Waters boat tour and the Cockpit Country Adventure Tours.



Falmouth/Martha Brae Geographic Setting



Rafting on the Martha Brae attracts some 50 000 visitors per year and employs 90 raft captains

According to the Greater Falmouth Development Plan, unemployment is high in the Parish (29%) and especially high in Falmouth (43%). The areas of highest unemployment are concentrated near the wetlands south of the town of Falmouth where there is a high squatter population

Given the Falmouth and Martha Brae area's strategic location near the international airport and in close proximity to the major tourism markets of Montego Bay and Ocho Rios, the area is well positioned to exploit its natural and cultural heritage attributes as well as to assist in diversifying and enhancing

Jamaica's tourism product offering. As illustrated in the following exhibit, within the Falmouth/Martha Brae market area there is a substantial number of rooms supplying overnight accommodations for international and resident visitors

Exhibit 2.1 Falmouth/Martha Brae Market Area Rooms Available, 1997

Market	Hotel	Guest House	Resort Villas	Apts	Total Rooms
Montego Bay	5,405	533	1,360	482	7,780
Ocho Rios	4,076	288	1,322	962	6,648

Source: Annual Travel Statistics 1997 Jamaica Tourist Board

The nearly 15,000 market area rooms represent considerable demand for nature and cultural heritage tourism products, especially since there are few such opportunities now available. The high concentration of all-inclusive hotels in Ocho Rios (50% of the island inventory, according to Jamaica Tourist Board figures) may dampen the demand somewhat since these visitors are typically on a one week visit and are often reluctant to leave their resort area for half-day or day trips. One niche market that the Falmouth/Martha Brae area might profitably fill is to complement the present supply of market area rooms with small hotels and ecolodges.

In addition to market area rooms, the cruise ship market of both Montego Bay and Ocho Rios represents additional demand for nature and cultural heritage tourism products. In 1997 530,000 cruise passengers landed in Ocho Rios and 180,000 landed in Montego Bay. Pre-booked tours from both ports represent an important market for Falmouth and Martha Brae attractions.

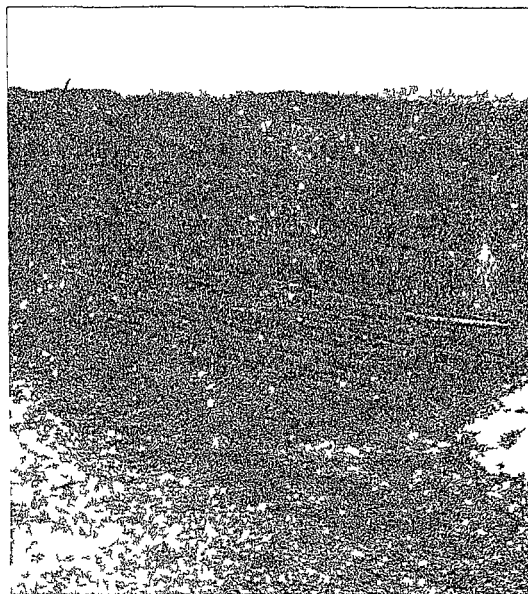
The recently prepared "Greater Falmouth Pre-Feasibility Study" (which focussed on historic Falmouth attractions only) estimated a total potential demand from all markets of 283,800 visitors annually. Certainly, a set of well-conceived nature and cultural heritage tourism products offers the potential for the Falmouth/Martha Brae area to become a major Caribbean tourism destination.

2.3 Environmental Issues

There are a host of environmental issues from the ridges of the Cockpit Country to the wetlands and reefs surrounding Falmouth. Deforestation is a serious threat to the Cockpit Country's biodiversity. It results from poor land clearing practices for agriculture, the cutting of saplings for yam sticks and fuelwood and logging.

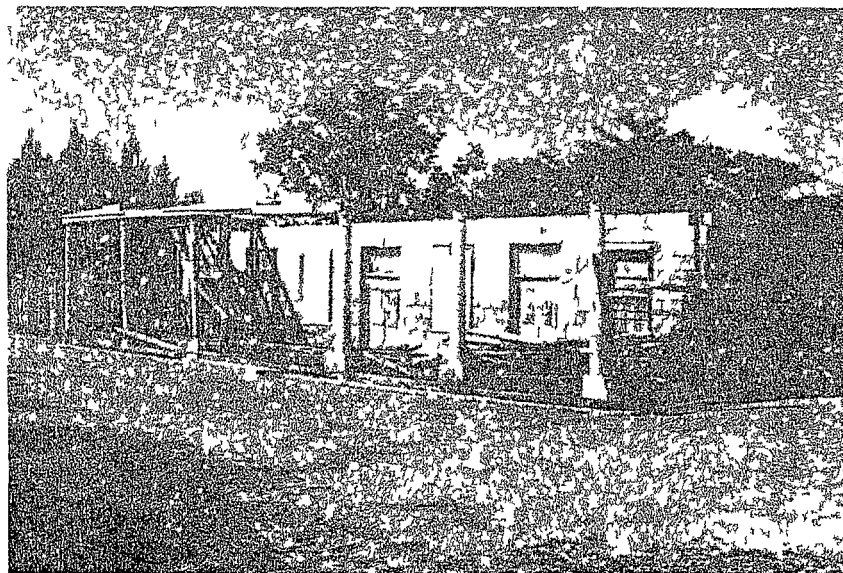
In the lower elevations, sedimentation and pollution of the Martha Brae from land clearing and agricultural chemicals is a continuing threat. The Martha Brae estuary is under severe stress from a series of poorly-planned agricultural and fish-rearing schemes, from extensive filling and squatting at the fringes and from illegal solid waste disposal. Extensive cutting of the mangrove forests for fuelwood is also a serious problem.

The town of Falmouth is an island surrounded by the sea and the estuary. It is sited on a high water table that renders the disposal of storm water and sewage very difficult. Much of the community does not have sewers and the discharge of sewage creates significant public health threats and ultimately finds its way to the surrounding coral reefs. The reefs are under stress from this pollution as well as from overfishing and recent storm damage.



Yam production on the edges of the Cockpit Country is said to account for a demand of at least 5 000 000 yam sticks per year, many of which come from the surrounding Cockpit Country. Yams are a major and growing export crop in the Trelawny Parish.

Another significant, and irreversible, environmental threat is the loss of historic structures both within Falmouth and the surrounding area. While the absence of development pressure has been a factor in the retention of many of these historic structures, the same lack of development pressure is now resulting in poor maintenance and no impetus for renovation. This is resulting in the gradual deterioration and ultimate loss of the historic building stock.



The historically significant Barrett House structure was intact until recently. It now has lost its entire second floor and this has rendered its reconstruction more costly and difficult.

3. Natural & Cultural Heritage Resources Protection Efforts to Date

3.1 Government of Jamaica

The government has established two protected areas in the area: Glistening Waters Marine Sanctuary and the Historic Falmouth National Monument. The Cockpit Country is high on the list of potential National Parks and is now being considered for World Bank/GEF support to establish a protected area that would include portions of the Martha Brae upper watershed. In addition, the Town Planning Department has recently completed the Greater Falmouth Development Plan which includes numerous recommendations for tourism and natural resources management, as well as housing, waste management, transportation and other elements directly affecting the protection of natural and cultural heritage tourism resources.

3.2 Non-Government Organizations

NGOs in Falmouth and the Martha Brae watershed have taken an early interest in nature and cultural heritage tourism. The Trelawny Environmental Protection Association has led community action to document the environmental conditions of the Martha Brae estuary and to protect the wetlands from further filling and inappropriate development. TEPA received financial support from the Environmental Foundation of Jamaica to carry out an environmental assessment of the estuary but a lack of continuity of volunteer leadership and financial support for core staff has prevented timely completion of that project. In a meeting with TEPA board members, strong interest was stated for completing this work and continuing on to prepare a management plan for the estuary that would lead to establishment of a marine and estuary protected area (see page 9).

The Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency is based in Albert Town and draws its membership from communities within a radius of about 30 miles. The STEA mission is "to facilitate the economic development of southern Trelawny through environmental protection and research, ecotourism, and the promotion of environmentally sound practices." It operates an enterprise called Cockpit Country Adventure Tours that provides walking tours of the Cockpit Country. This is one of several means by which STEA is pursuing sustainable financing of its environmental education and conservation activities. It has received financial support from the EFJ, the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the US Peace Corps. STEA's mission and actual practice is an excellent example of a community-based nature tourism activity addressing environmental management, education and awareness, income and employment generation, and financial sustainability.

3.3 Private Organizations and Individuals

Several private organizations and individuals have been instrumental in protecting natural and cultural assets. The Falmouth Restoration Company and the Jamaica Heritage Trails Limited has received financial support from EFJ and the Facey Commodity Company, American Express, and other private sources to lead efforts to protect historic Falmouth's architectural heritage and to promote historic restoration and redevelopment of the downtown. A recent project to repair and preserve 14 small, privately-owned historic houses was successfully completed by FRC and JHTL. The project also trained 16 young men in historic preservation crafts and enticed contributions to the project from a host of local construction materials enterprises. Private individuals have successfully restored several key historic buildings that might have otherwise been lost including the Baptist

Manse, the Good Hope Great House, the Greenwood Great House, Hampden Estate and others. In addition, several private sector nature tourism operations have successfully operated tours and worked with local communities to provide employment and to protect the natural resources on which their tourism operations depend. The Martha Brae Rafting Tour is the most notable in the area.

4. The Vision for Sustainable Tourism in Falmouth and the Martha Brae Watershed

From discussions with Falmouth leaders, NGO representatives, private sector interests, and government agencies, it is clear that there is broad agreement about the needs of Falmouth and the Martha Brae watershed. On everybody's list of priorities are

- improving the economy to expand jobs and income,
- renovating the area's unmatched architectural heritage,
- protecting the watershed's relatively high level of environmental quality,
- conserving the Martha Brae estuary and the mangrove/coral reef ecosystem,
- improving housing, especially the squatter settlements,
- improving liquid and solid waste management, and
- improving social conditions, including education and health

Those residing here love the area but are worried about lack of employment, about the decline in environmental quality, and about the poor quality of housing. Many see the income and employment potential that can be derived from nature and cultural heritage tourism associated with a revitalized Falmouth and of a well-managed natural environment throughout the watershed.

4.1 The Vision for Historic Falmouth

To the Falmouth Restoration Company, the Georgian Society, the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, the Jamaica Heritage Trails Limited, the Chamber of Commerce and others before them, the vision is a restored Falmouth with its architectural treasures setting the stage for a world-class tourism development that tells the story of rum, sugar and slavery and that positively engages community members in well-paying jobs associated with tourism and crafts.

The recently completed OAS-financed pre-feasibility study for the Falmouth redevelopment prepared by Commonwealth, the ARA Group and Roy Stephenson Associates was prepared in close consultation with many of the key constituent groups and individuals interested in historic Falmouth. The vision presented in the study is one of revitalized structures throughout the historic downtown and a redeveloped waterfront that together would provide for many public uses including restaurants, small bed and breakfast inns, refreshment stands, quality shops, pubs, attractions and other activities.

A key element would be the development of a "slavery/fight for freedom/emancipation" museum that would tell the stories of plantation life, freedom fighters, maroons, and spiritual leaders and present renditions of Jamaica's oral and performing arts heritage. It would be a world-class museum.

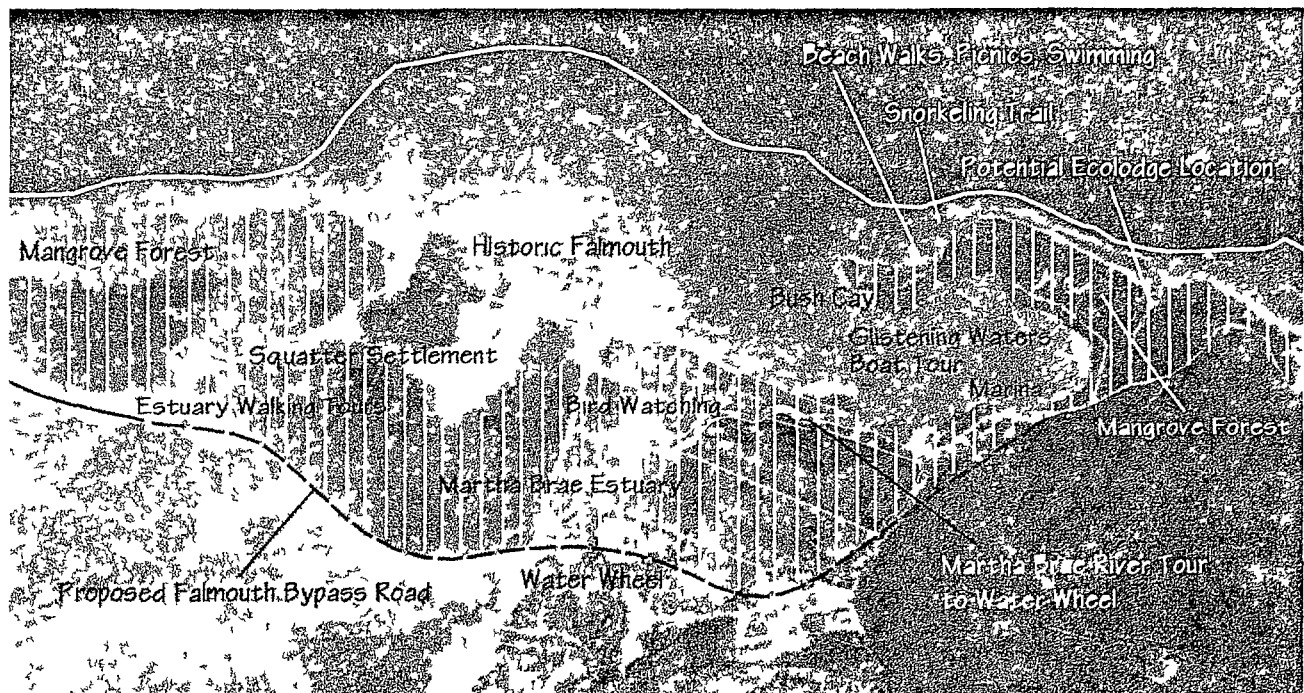
and developers would seek the support and counsel of international organizations such as UNESCO, WTO and the Smithsonian Institute in its design and implementation. The building elements to be incorporated would be the Tharpe House, the Central and Hampden Wharves, the Baptist Manse, and the Barrett House. There would be extensive infrastructure improvements including the rerouting of traffic to the planned bypass on the south side of the Martha Brae Estuary, parking improvements, sewage collection, storm water management, landscaping and beautification, and telecommunications.

The study confirmed the economic feasibility of the vision for historic Falmouth, assuming several key elements are in place. These elements include the planned redirection of traffic, improved sewage collection, a beautification and parking improvement program, and construction of the museum. As noted earlier, the demand from all markets (local, cruise shipping, and other international tourists) was estimated at 283,800 visitors per year and the study estimates that the development would generate at least US\$25 million per year.

The study correctly places emphasis on the need to restore Falmouth in a manner that is consistent with and respects community values and directly benefits local citizens. This theme was mentioned on many occasions by NGO and community leaders.

4.2 The Vision for the Martha Brae Estuary and Coastal Resources

To the Trelawny Environmental Protection Association, many local leaders, and several nature tourism operators, the vision is a protected area stretching from White Bay on the east to Salt Marsh Bay on the west, including the entire Martha Brae estuary out to the coral reefs. This protected area would aim to preserve the remaining mangrove forests and the Glistening Waters biological phenomenon, stop the inappropriate filling of the wetlands and restore the health of the estuary and of the coral reefs. Realization of this vision would also generate many nature tourism opportunities.



Proposed Marine and Estuary Protected Area

(Martha Brae river tours, Glistening Waters boat tours, Bush Cay and Salt Marsh Bay mangroves and coral reef tours, Martha Brae estuary birdwatching and nature trail tours, etc) that would provide employment to local citizens and sustainability to NGO environmental management activities

A unique opportunity exists to engage the private owners of Bush Cay (Mountain Point) with NGOs in partnership to plan, operate and maintain an ecological reserve encompassing the mangroves, the pristine two-mile beach, and the adjacent coral reefs. This area lends itself to private development of an ecolodge that could be sited and designed in a way that would maximize its appeal as a destination hotel and minimize its impact on the adjacent ecosystems. An NGO(s) could develop, operate and maintain nature trails and boardwalks, dive and snorkeling sites, boat transport for visitors from the downtown waterfront, and other nature tourism activities for fees that would sustain management of the protected area.

TEPA board members identified other nature tourism/revenue generation opportunities within the protected area that they would hope to operate and that would further financially sustain protected area management. These include the evening boat tours of Glistening Waters and day boat tours up the Martha Brae River to the Waterwheel from a waterfront site in downtown Falmouth, snorkeling tours off Bush Cay and birdwatching hikes and nature tours with the estuary and mangrove forests to the east and west of Falmouth.

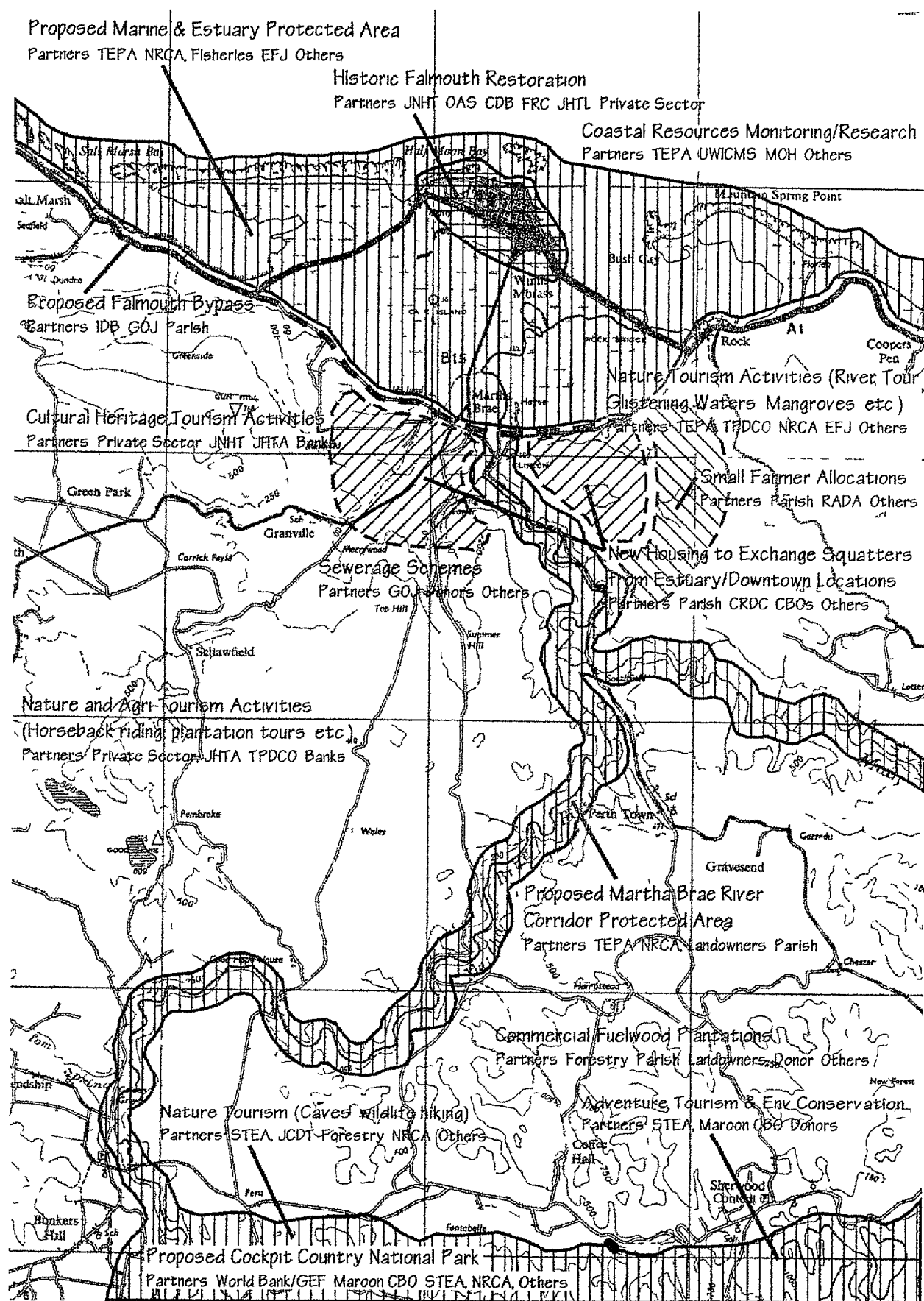


The pristine beach at Bush Cay

4.3 The Vision for the Martha Brae Uplands

To certain landowners in the Martha Brae uplands and to tourism operators, the vision for sustainable tourism is a blend of cultural heritage tourism capitalizing on the wonderful specimens of historic architecture remaining in plantation settings (sugar and rum factories, a slave hospital, great houses, etc), nature tourism (horseback rides, country hikes, river rafting, etc) and agritourism (visits to papaya and sugar plantations, organic coffee plantations and to yam producing areas). All of these rural tourism opportunities would capitalize on the quiet, pastoral beauty of the plantation and river setting and Cockpit Country backdrop. They would also operate side-by-side with existing agricultural activities, including tree fruit crops, sugar cane, and livestock.

Two landowners—Hampden Estates and Orange Valley Farms—have operated tourism activities in the past and have indicated a desire to resume operations. The tour on Hampden Estates would include a sugar and rum factory and a restored great house. At Orange Valley Farms, the tour would

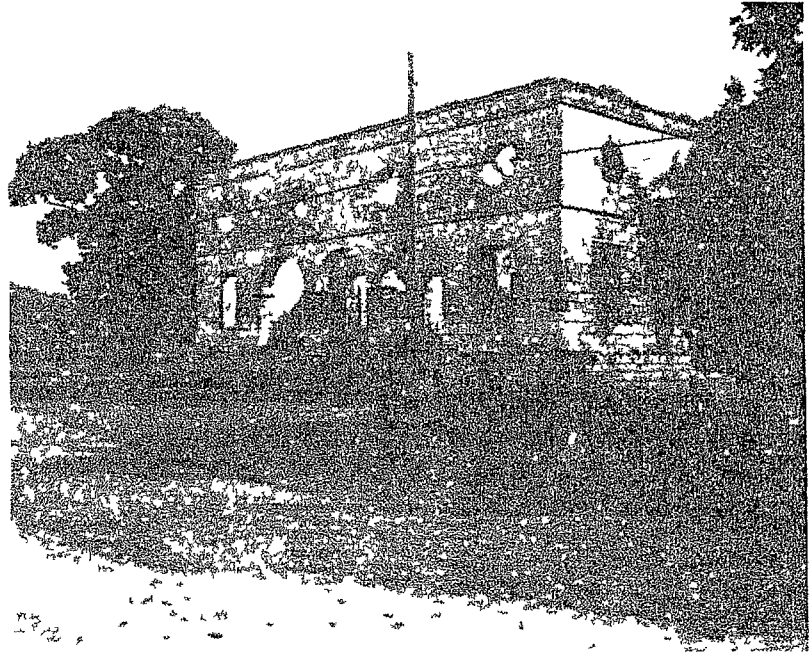


Falmouth/Martha Brae Sustainable Tourism Destination

Illustrative Environmental Management & Tourism Development Activities

highlight a slave hospital (including its many intact records and artifacts) and other historic buildings and include visits to its various agricultural activities. These tourism products would benefit from comprehensive development of the watershed as a sustainable tourism destination with a range of diverse activities for the visitor. Both owners face common problems heard from managers of other tourism activities in the area: the absence of cooperative promotion and marketing of the area's assets and the need to negotiate equitable shares of fees charged by tour operators for transport of visitors to these activities.

An important opportunity exists to create a river corridor protected area along the course of the Martha Brae from its source in the Cockpit Country to its estuary. This river corridor would be comprised of crown, Parish and private lands and might include up to 100 meters or more on either side of the river where land use activities would be controlled, water quality measures (prevention of pollution from pesticides, siltation and agricultural and liquid wastes) would be established, and recreational activities and scenic resources would be emphasized.



The Slave Hospital at Orange Valley

Finally, local leaders indicate the Martha Brae uplands will need to absorb certain land use activities that will reduce pressure on natural resources in other parts of the watershed. In order to curb indiscriminate destruction of mangroves and forests, land will need to be made available for commercial fuelwood plantations and investment opportunities provided for charcoal producers to reduce their dependence on environmentally destructive practices. Certain Parish, crown and private lands will need to be identified to offer opportunities to exchange squatters from environmentally sensitive areas by providing secure land tenure and access to services. And other economic activities such as development of niche agricultural markets (cantaloupes, winter and special vegetables, herbs, etc.), meat processing and fruit drying will be necessary to increase local employment opportunities.

4.4 The Vision for the Martha Brae Headwaters and Cockpit Country

To the Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency and to some tourism operators, the vision for the upper reaches of the Martha Brae and for the Cockpit Country is one of adventure tourism, biodiversity-based tourism, scientific research tours and cultural tourism that offers visitors a glimpse of rural Jamaicans' ways of life. These tourism activities would depend on and support improved conservation practices and environmental awareness. The very real possibility of a World Bank GEF-financed creation of a Cockpit Country National Park and the attendant improved environmental management would reinforce this vision. Key to protection of the Cockpit Country's

natural resources and the development of sustainable tourism activities in this area is the support and full participation of the Maroon community in all planning and decision making

4.5 The “Composite” Vision and Challenges to its Achievement

It is the completed puzzle or the composite of these separate visions that sets the stage for a future that can enable environmental management, economic development and an improved quality of life for local citizens. There are few settings in the world that match the potential of the Martha Brae to serve as a world class destination for community-based tourism. Ringed by one potential World Heritage Site on the south (Cockpit Country) and another potential World Heritage Site on the north (historic Falmouth and the surrounding proposed protected area) and connected by an important estuary, a scenic river corridor and pastoral countryside, the setting is replete with opportunities for nature, cultural heritage and agricultural tourism.

While these alternatives to traditional tourism are important to develop on a national basis, focussing on this watershed is an important step both because of its unique potential but also because it can serve as a model for similar efforts elsewhere in the nation. By approaching the development of sustainable tourism from a “ridge-to-reef” perspective, stakeholders throughout the watershed will be more able to recognize the interrelationships of development and management activities, the need to approach these activities in an integrated fashion and how they can benefit from and contribute to the vision.

Virtually any intervention in any part of the watershed to improve the environment or to initiate tourism activities will have implications elsewhere in the watershed. Management of the environmental health (and tourism potential) of the estuary and marine environment is dependent on managing the adverse impacts of activities higher in the watershed, such as sedimentation from improper agricultural practices and fuelwood/yamstick cutting, or pollution from improper use of pesticides. Likewise, any hopes of correcting damage in the estuary from squatting will require providing secure land tenure in other locations (most probably in the uplands above the estuary) to facilitate relocation of affected squatters. And any plans to revitalize the historic downtown will require the support of all area residents and will depend on actions beyond the confines of downtown (e.g., re-routing traffic, disposing of solid and liquid waste, developing quality nature tourism activities for visitors to downtown, linking historic Falmouth with the historic attractions throughout the watershed to maximize destination appeal, etc.).

These visions for sustainable tourism are not new. Certainly the potential of historic Falmouth has been recognized for decades. And the value of the area’s natural assets have also been long recognized. Why then is there so little evidence of progress toward the vision? Many cite insufficient finance as the major impediment but there is little evidence of this. Key funding sources suggest that the reverse is true. On the non-government side, there is an abundance of funds available for good, “bankable” NGO environmental management activities that show implementation promise. On the private sector side, money, most will say, follows good ideas and there is no shortage of money for development of world-class tourism destinations as the Falmouth/Martha Brae area promises to be. And on the international donor and lending institution side, grants and loans also follow good ideas—especially those that offer to address employment and environmental improvement.

While attracting sufficient finance is no doubt a hurdle that must be overcome, the absence of progress can be traced to a host of other issues that can be addressed—at least in part—by NRCA and its development partners. These include

- the absence of a well-articulated vision for the watershed interpreted to a plan of action that people will support,
- the absence of a national priority to diversify Jamaica's tourism product,
- the absence of partnerships between government agencies, local organizations and the business community working closely with the range of constituent interests to advance common objectives,
- the absence of local leadership to develop and manage projects, and
- the absence of good policy (standards, incentives, licensing, regulatory compliance) that provides the right framework to encourage NGO and private sector initiative

5 A Blueprint for NRCA Initiatives Applying Best Practices

Given these (and other) challenges, how might NRCA position itself and use its own growing capacity to be an effective agent of change in order to facilitate the accomplishment of the vision for sustainable tourism outlined by local leaders? Growing from NRCA experience and “best practices” learned from other watershed and community activities (Negril, Montego Bay, Black River, Port Royal, etc.), there are a number of initiatives that bear promise

5.1 Engage NGOs, other government agencies and the private sector as full partners in sustainable development and build on existing local initiatives

In order for NRCA to assist achievement of the vision, partnerships with other government agencies, NGOs and private sector interests will be essential. There is no one entity that can expect to accomplish a great deal on its own. Literally every effort to conserve natural resources, expand income and employment or protect the cultural heritage of this area risks failure unless creative ways can be found to engage all interests in working together toward common ends.

NGO Partners

As NRCA has championed in the past, it will be important to assist in further developing participatory practices at the local level that lead to increased “ownership” and self-reliance. Several success stories in Jamaica (Negril, Portland) demonstrate the promise of commitment to this approach and provide a body of knowledge on which to base guidelines and best practices. While community-based planning represents a lot of hard work for NRCA, it is clear that this approach is necessary for sustainable development.

The efforts by STEA, TEPA, and FRC (as outlined in Section 3) are outstanding organizational building blocks for developing a watershed-wide set of interventions. Important initiatives have already been undertaken by each organization and each has built a constituency for its existence. Together, these groups cover the geographic area and have organizational missions that address important elements: cultural heritage protection, sustainable finance from community-based tourism, environmental education and management, environmental employment and protected area

management These NGOs can play the critical roles of establishing channels of communication and coordination between development professionals, nature and cultural heritage tourism site managers/developers, community institutions and tourism planners

Each NGO will need assistance to strengthen its capacity and to develop “bankable” projects that will attract sufficient support to provide core funding for accomplishing environmental management projects and for building the means to achieve long-term financing And all will need sufficient “incubation” to assure the institutional capacity and technical skills to lead and coordinate development activities

Government Agency Partners

NRCA’s public sector watershed management partners are the key operational units—Forestry, RADA, Fisheries, TPDCO, the Trelawny Parish Council, National Water Commission and the Water Resources Authority—within or associated with the Ministries of Agriculture, Works, Tourism, Local Government, and Water Other partners include the JNHT (to protect historic buildings and sites in Falmouth and throughout the watershed), the Ministry of Housing (to promote alternative housing and land tenure schemes that will address the squatter settlement issues) and, possibly, UWICED (to assist in building a strong economic sustainability perspective) Each of these (and other) players need to be seen as key partners in implementing watershed activities and especially in working together with local groups to identify and promote new policies that will foster community stakeholder support for environmental protection and economic development

Key policy initiatives for the Martha Brae watershed might include

- promotion of protected areas to facilitate managing key natural assets including the Cockpit Country, the Martha Brae River corridor, the Martha Brae Estuary, and the marine resources of Salt Marsh Bay, Glistening Waters and Bush Cay,
- provision of land tenure for small farmers and residents including programs to exchange squatters from environmentally sensitive areas (most notably the Martha Brae estuary),
- promotion of fuelwood plantations and expansion of conservation forests to reduce inappropriate mangrove and forest cutting,
- securing of financing for key infrastructural requirements (sewage collection, roads, parking, etc),
- encouraging environment-benefitting innovations such as yam sticks made from recycled plastics to reduce cutting of forest saplings,
- protection of the rights of local people to have access to and make use of tourism sites and resources, and
- regulations permitting local collection and retention of user fees by NGOs and CBOs engaged in nature and cultural heritage tourism and environmental management activities

Private Sector Partners

The private partners will include business interest groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, JHTL, and the Hotel and Tourist Association as well as individual entrepreneurs. While the private sector does not seek special institutional strengthening measures, it has many needs to be addressed. Some fall within NRCA's purview, others fall under the responsibilities of NRCA's key public sector partners. An example of NRCA initiative might be to work with the private owner of Bush Cay to facilitate an environmentally-sensitive ecolodge development that could work in cooperation with local NGOs to develop nature tourism opportunities as part of management of the proposed protected area. Another GOJ initiative might be to secure financing from bilateral or multilateral assistance agencies to finance key infrastructure on which development of tourism sites depends. And yet another example is TPDCO and JHTA assistance to private developers of nature and cultural heritage tourism sites or of small hotels such as bed and breakfasts to have access to established channels for marketing and promotion.

5.2 Develop consensus and an "action framework" supported by all partners

The first step of facilitation of partnerships may be the establishment of a "sustainable development council" (or other title) made up of pertinent government, community and private sector partners. This group could oversee development of an "action framework" which would set priorities for activities, coordinate efforts, assign leadership responsibilities, facilitate finance, secure donor assistance and provide general guidance and support.

The point of departure for the council is to assess the condition of the natural resource base, the opportunities for economic development and environmental protection, the implementation constraints, the prospects for financial support from various sources, and, especially, the perspectives of local citizens. The results of this assessment can be published in the format of an action framework similar to—although much more abbreviated than—the environmental policy frameworks prepared for Port Royal and Black River. This should be done quickly with the recognition that this is an exercise to shape an approach to interventions in the watershed and there will be ample opportunity to delve into greater depth as the work unfolds.

5.3 Identify the components of a sustainable tourism program and assign partnership leadership responsibilities

Once an action framework is begun, an array of desirable interventions will unfold. Some of these will appropriately fall to NRCA to provide leadership but most will fall to other partners. In the latter cases, NRCA's role may be principally to facilitate and support the work of others. The interventions are likely to include at least the following components:

The Marine and Estuarine Environment

- enhance efforts for completing the scientific assessment of coral reef, mangrove and wetland ecosystems initiated by TEPA,
- facilitate preparation of a management plan as a basis for establishing a protected area,
- work with the Parish Council and government housing programs to exchange squatters within the estuary to appropriate lands (probably Parish-owned) with secure tenure to be identified above the wetlands,

- develop fuelwood plantations, educational programs and regulatory compliance measures to retard cutting of mangroves,
- assure that all further squatting in the estuary is halted, that NWC provides no further services to squatter settlements within environmentally sensitive areas of the estuary and that worst offending residential landfills in the estuary are removed,
- encourage landholders/leaseholders within the estuary (e g , the Agricultural Development Corporation and others) to either remove their interests in the land or achieve a use that is compatible with managing the resources of the estuary,
- secure the active participation of CBOs to assist in changing behavior of those that degrade the environment by creating alternative ways of earning incomes and by improving the general welfare of the local community,
- work with TEPA, the Discovery Bay Marine Lab and others to identify, reduce and eliminate point and non-point sources of land and marine pollution and to establish an environmental monitoring system for water quality and ecosystem health within the planned protected area,

Nature and Cultural Heritage Tourism Initiatives

- assist TEPA to establish community-based nature tourism opportunities within the protected area including the Glistening Waters boat tour, Martha Brae River tour, the Bush Cay/ Mountain Spring Point and the Salt Marsh Bay coral reef and mangrove forest tours, harbor boat tours, birdwatching trails, etc ,
- assist TEPA, STEA, FRC and other NGOs in developing marketing plans and financial sustainability programs for sustainable tourism initiatives,
- assist JNHT, FRC, JHTL, donors and the private sector to define a development plan for the upgrading and revitalization of Falmouth that is consistent with and respects community values,
- assist JHTA, TPDCO, the Chamber of Commerce and private developers to develop sustainable tourism attractions based on the watershed s unique assets by establishing standards, preparing plans, developing cooperative systems for promotion, marketing, transport, etc ,

The Upland Watershed Environment

- assist STEA and other NGOs, RADA, and others in conservation and environmental education programs that promote soil conservation, proper use of pesticides, and improved agricultural practices,
- assist Forestry, NGOs, and private landowners in establishing commercial fuelwood and commercial forest plantations,
- encourage public and private landowners to establish a protected river corridor along the length of the Martha Brae to maintain its beauty, its utility and hygiene as an urban water source, and its benefits for recreation and tourism,
- promote the establishment of the Cockpit Country National Park and conservation of its buffer areas,

Private Hotels and Tourism-Related Services

- assist JHTA to encourage local large hotels (i e , the Trelawny Beach Hotel) to introduce measures to operate more sustainably and with reduced operating expenditures by reducing

waste and eliminating pollution (as has been accomplished with other Jamaican hotels under the USAID-financed EAST project),

- assist JHTA and lending institutions to assist small locally-owned hotels and individuals wishing to develop small hotels to achieve a high quality of service through a fund for renovating historic properties, training in accounting and management, and, possibly the creation of cooperative systems for small hotels for group purchasing, reservation systems, promotion and marketing, etc ,
- work with the private owner of Bush Cay to encourage ecolodge development as an alternative to a traditional hotel and to secure agreements on partnerships with NGOs and NRCA for ecosystem management,

Municipal and Parish Services

- assist in developing solid waste and sewage collection and treatment projects,
- encourage the upgrading or elimination of squatter settlements through the provision of lowcost housing, secure tenure and basic services,
- develop environmental education programs in the schools and communities to increase environmental awareness and the benefits of sustainable, community-based tourism,
- assist in physical planning activities that will promote proper land use patterns, community involvement, road and infrastructure improvements, downtown parking, etc ,

5 4 Create a Falmouth/Martha Brae “Sustainable Tourism Destination”

Tourism professionals in the Caribbean region are currently discussing the creation of sustainable tourism destinations (or other title) in designated areas where the natural resources are managed in an integrated manner designed to mitigate existing environmental degradation and prevent new sources of pollution and environmental loss. The proposed tourism destinations would be designed to ensure that the use of natural resources by the private sector, local communities and government agencies avoids pollution and poor land use practices. Once the overall physical environment of the sustainable tourism destination has improved, “Green Globe” or an equivalent regional certification will be requested for the destination. Such a designation would enhance the image of the Falmouth/Martha Brae destination in the international tourism market and thus increase its competitiveness.

Given the expected growth in tourism worldwide and the growing demand by tourists for “green” destinations, a Falmouth/Martha Brae sustainable tourism destination should help Jamaica increase its market share of tourist arrivals and to increase the value of the tourism product. Investors and entrepreneurs in the destination will benefit financially from increased business and through an appreciation of the value of their investments. In addition, the quality of life in Falmouth and other Martha Brae watershed communities would improve through reduction of pollution and squatter settlements, provision of housing and basic services, and the greater assurance of continued employment because of a more sustainable tourism product. A further objective is the diversification of the local tourism product to enhance the availability of nature, cultural heritage and other alternative tourism and to improve the availability and efficiency of smaller, locally owned and managed hotels.

5.5 Focus on financial sustainability of tourism and protected area initiatives

The activities identified by local groups in their visions for sustainable tourism (see section 3) cannot be undertaken by the stakeholders in the Falmouth/Martha Brae sustainable tourism destination without front-end technical and financial assistance. Initial donor support for traditional infrastructure projects and social programs will be essential to encourage private sector financing of environmental improvements and new nature and cultural heritage tourism initiatives.

High priority must be given at the onset to identifying economically feasible tourism and protected area management initiatives and to finding creative and sustainable ways for stakeholders to better meet the recurrent costs of these initiatives. Excessive reliance on government or donor support is clearly not sustainable, and, ultimately, sustainable tourism destinations must become self-financing. In order to achieve financial sustainability, all proposed activities should be subjected to rigorous financial analyses to assure both their investment feasibility as well as the capacity of local entities to meet long-term recurrent costs.

The NRCA and its partners need to promote the commitment on the part of the private sector to financially support and become a driving force for sustainable development—especially in activities related to the tourism sector. The emphasis should be to combine new private sources with other community stakeholder resources in order to more productively address shared environmental challenges. Private sector financing for direct investments and for public/private partnerships must be attracted through such entities as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) of the World Bank Group, the private sector arm of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the US Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). Participation by local entrepreneurs must be encouraged but may only happen in earnest once the sustainable tourism destination concept is proven successful.

Key to financial sustainability is joint private/public/NGO/donor initiatives to secure long-term finance for environmental improvements. Foremost among these could be the establishment of a local trust fund whose focus would be to provide an endowment for the long-term finance of improvements within the Falmouth/Martha Brae area. Possible sources of funding include

- tourist voluntary contribution programs that are built on tourists' inclinations to contribute to activities that improve the environment of the place they have enjoyed,
- grants and/or endowment funding from foundations,
- grants from major international private stakeholders (e.g., Florida-Caribbean Cruise Lines, American Airlines, British Airways, American Express, etc.),
- user fees from NGO-operated tours,
- bilateral and multilateral grants, and
- a host of other fundraising initiatives such as capital campaigns and merchandising programs.

5.6 Target priority actions and build on success as resources become available

In developing its strategy for the Martha Brae watershed, NRCA and its partners must recognize that many of the above interventions may not be possible initially. In determining priorities for action, a number of criteria must be considered, including at least the following

Irreversible Loss of Natural and Cultural Resources

As outlined in Section 5, there are significant sustainable tourism development opportunities that deserve immediate attention. Without such attention, the assets on which tourism would be based (historic architecture, estuarine ecology, mangrove forests, etc.) may be irreversibly lost. If only limited resources are available, there is a strong argument for focussing on those assets needing urgent protection if only to leave options open for future generations.

Community Readiness to Move Ahead

Key to successful efforts to develop sustainable tourism is the community's readiness to move ahead. While there have been commendable efforts to address environmental management and sustainable tourism by local citizens (see section 3), every NGO requires assistance of one type or another to reach their goals. In the case of TEPA, assistance through EFJ or the Green Fund may be necessary for this organization to resolve its chronic problem with inadequate core staffing and intermittent volunteer support. A field assessment carried out as part of the environmental policy framework should identify specific training and institutional strengthening needs and clarify the speed with which design and implementation activities can occur.

Available Donor Support

Some donors such as OAS have already provided recent assistance to the area and have expressed an interest and willingness to do more. The World Bank is seriously evaluating opportunities to advance the Cockpit Country National Park. The sustainable tourism thrust is one that has captured the interest of donors across the Caribbean including USAID, CIDA, EU, GTZ, IDB and others. The richness of opportunity (environmental protection, economic development, historic preservation, protected area creation, etc.) in the Falmouth/Martha Brae area suggests many avenues for assistance on the parts of multiple donors. NRCA, working with its partners, could play a pivotal role in directing donor resources to this watershed.

NRCA Capacity to Provide Assistance

The level of effort NRCA can invest as well as that of its partners is understandably tied to the requirements of other national priorities and to staff capacity and budget allocations. Only a minimal level of effort may be required to facilitate preparation of an action framework and to bring strategic partners together to set priority activities in motion. With respect to NRCA, a great deal can be accomplished through advocacy, leadership, policy reform and group facilitation—without expenditure of significant staff and financial resources. It will be essential to have one appointed NRCA staff person serving (perhaps initially only as part-time) as an advocate/facilitator/advisor for Falmouth/Martha Brae matters.

There are a great number of actions needed by a great number of organizations and individuals. There will be inevitable staff and budgetary constraints and inevitable inability of some crucial government, NGO and local partners to carry out initiatives. An assessment of these limits is needed on the front end and after doing so, NRCA and its partners may proceed with priority actions at a pace reflective of the availability of resources and organizational readiness. Several "levels of commitment" are represented here:

1. At the minimum, a Martha Brae sustainable development coordinating council (or other title)

made up all principal players (government, community and private) should be established. This group would oversee development of an “action framework” which would set priorities for activities, establish sets of partnerships to pursue priority actions, assign leadership responsibilities, facilitate finance, secure donor assistance and provide general guidance and support to groups and individuals carrying out sustainable tourism and environmental management activities. Ideally, at least a part-time individual (probably from NRCA) would provide staff assistance. Even if very limited funds and staff are available, this council must find ways to

- take immediate actions necessary to prevent irreversible loss of key resources or opportunities, e.g., permanent destruction of the wetlands from illegal filling or demolition of vulnerable historic buildings such as the Barrett House or Slave Hospital at Orange Valley,
 - carry out no-cost activities such as advocating for continuing OAS support for historic Falmouth (preparation of the full feasibility study to provide a basis for action and lending institution financing), for World Bank/GEF financing of Cockpit Country National Park, for EFJ financing of NGO activities, etc
- 2 If a moderate level of resources are available, the council should build on priority local efforts underway, e.g.,
- develop an NRCA/TEPA partnership to complete the environmental assessment of the estuary and prepare the management plan for the proposed protected area,
 - assist TEPA to carry out economic feasibility studies of proposed nature tourism activities and to develop a financial sustainability plan,
 - work with GOJ agencies and the Parish Council to resolve land tenure issues in order to relocate squatters from environmentally sensitive areas in the wetlands (as well as from the right-of-way of the proposed bypass route),
 - assist JNHT and private groups such as the JHTL to advance historic preservation efforts and establish the arrangements for the proposed museum complex,
 - help secure grants for FRC’s work to improve housing conditions in Falmouth and to restore small houses, and
 - support STEA’s continued efforts in environmental education, nature tourism, and promotion of improved hillside agricultural practices
- 3 If donor or other resources are available and if there is sufficient organizational readiness to proceed on many fronts, assist Falmouth leaders to achieve their visions of a complete world-class sustainable tourism destination that improves both environmental conditions and quality of life for residents. These NRCA/development partner actions would lead to
- declaration of a marine and estuary protected area and river corridor protected area,
 - revitalization of historic Falmouth including necessary infrastructural improvements,
 - a variety of nature and cultural heritage tourism enterprises, small hotels and related tourism services that are operated by private individuals and NGOs
 - establishment of financial sustainability programs for community-based tourism and environmental management including revenue generation programs, capital campaigns,

voluntary contribution programs,

- resolution of land tenure issues to contain further illegal settlements and provide citizens with suitable housing,
- creation of Cockpit Country National Park and buffer zones in the Martha Brae watershed,
- creation of alternative employment opportunities for those engaged in environmentally destructive practices, and
- other components of a sustainable tourism program outlined in section 4

Annex A List of Individuals Contacted

Royland Barrett, Honorable Custos & Chair, Falmouth Restoration Company
Sandra Butler, Trelawny Environmental Protection Association
Edward Campbell, Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency
Florence Campbell, Assistant Manager, Martha Brae Rafting Tours
Edward Farnworth, Environmental Advisor, Interamerican Development Bank
Patrick Harris, Director, Trelawny Environmental Protection Association
Tony & Sheila Hart, Private Developer and Owners, Good Hope Great House
Alec & Jacqui Henderson, Owners, Orange Valley Estates, Ltd
Dennis Kuklok, Environmental Planning Specialist & Consultant to USAID/DEMO Project
Carl Martin, Project Manager, North Coast Road Project
Dennis McIntyre, Director, Trelawny Environmental Protection Association
Camille Nuller, Southern Trelawny Environmental Agency
James Parrent, General Manager, Jamaica Heritage Trails Limited
Errol Richard, Director, Trelawny Environmental Protection Association
Michael Schwartz, Windsor Great House
Charles Swaby, Owner, Swaby Adventure Safaris
Sam Wedderburn, Regional Natural Resources Management Specialist, World Bank, Jamaica
Jeremy Woodley, Director, UWI Center for Marine Science, Mona Campus

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